

VZCZCXRO0123  
RR RUEH DU RUEHJO  
DE RUEHSA #4244/01 3611037  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 271037Z DEC 07  
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3029  
INFO RUEHTN/AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN 5173  
RUEH DU/AMCONSUL DURBAN 9456  
RUEHJO/AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG 7800  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRETORIA 004244

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED  
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STATE FOR AF AND H  
S/OFFICE OF GLOBAL AIDS COORDINATOR, BHAVNA PATEL  
STATE PLEASE PASS TO USAID GLOBAL HEALTH BUREAU  
HHS PLEASE PASS TO OFFICE OF GLOBAL HEALTH AFFAIRS, WILLIAM  
STEIGER AND SAMUEL ANDENIYI-JONES

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [KHIV](#) [OREP](#) [PREL](#) [SF](#) [SOCI](#)

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA  
SPOTLIGHTS USG PEPFAR EFFORTS TO FIGHT HIV AND AIDS

¶1. (U) Summary: A delegation representing the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF) led by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (Dem., Calif.), Del. Donna M. Christensen (Dem., Virgin Islands) and CBCF President Dr. Elsie Scott, visited South Africa November 27 - December 2, 2008. The delegation met with Minister of Social Development Dr. Zola Skweyiya, Minister of Education Naledi Pandor and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The visit occurred and was centered on World AIDS Day (WAD) and highlighted HIV/AIDS issues and the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program in South Africa. CBCF has played an important role in ensuring that the African continent becomes an important global strategic partner to the United States. With its focus on public health, leadership education and economic development, CBCF is looking to expand its reach in these areas internationally and to develop relationships abroad that will ultimately allow access to a dynamic pool of quality programs and services geared toward empowering black people and other underserved populations overseas. End Summary

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Structural and Capacity Issues Cited by Ministers  
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¶2. (SBU) The delegation met Minister of Social Development Skweyiya, whose ministry works closely with the USG PEPFAR team on issues surrounding orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Skweyiya admitted that structures to look after OVC are lacking in South Africa, especially since many of the traditional extended families that would normally care for OVC have been decimated by AIDS. Skweyiya explained that faith-based organizations (FBOs) are among the only presence in rural areas and that it is important for the churches to be involved in rural social support efforts and for the government to work with them. He noted that thousands of orphans are not registered and that there are insufficient social workers, as well as insufficient government workers, to administer the system. He stated that many of the problems that surround assistance to OVC are due more to a lack of an effective bureaucracy, than to a lack of funding. Skweyiya commented that "expectations for South Africa are too high, the pressure to do all too big" and that these important social issues will likely be lost amidst the upcoming political debate on ANC leadership.

¶3. (SBU) The delegation also met Education Minister Pandor, who expressed her concern with the high-level of HIV

infection in teachers and acknowledged PEPFAR support for the National Department of Education's HIV and AIDS peer education programs for learners. She noted that South Africa's Medical Research Council has reviewed some successful behavior change interventions in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province and will replicate one of their programs that was found to both educate students and alter behaviors. Although South Africa has achieved almost universal access to education, the Minister noted that many of the challenges she faces are a legacy of apartheid, including inequalities in the system and poor infrastructure. She pointed to the overarching challenges of educational transformation that will require greatly improving teacher quality and putting monitoring and evaluation systems in place. The Department is looking at ways to actively recruit educational administrators, especially in finance and management of higher education and would welcome recruits from abroad. Foundation President Scott noted that recruitment of educational personnel may be a possible area of collaboration between the Department of Education and the CBCF. The Ministry is also looking at ways to attract more black students to vocational training and to achieve gender parity in areas such as science and math. The Minister mentioned the role that South Africa is playing as a regional leader in Africa, suggesting that the United States may be able to support South Africa through trilateral partnerships. Representative Lee invited the Minister to come to Washington to meet with historically black college and university presidents and exchange lessons learned.

¶4. (U) The Delegation met briefly with Archbishop Tutu in a rare meeting at the Embassy. The Archbishop was in Pretoria delivering a WAD speech in which he called for enhanced

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public leadership to fight the epidemic. Representative Lee had met the Archbishop during his prior travels to the U.S.

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World AIDS Day Activities  
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¶5. (U) The Delegation took part in many WAD Activities. During these events, Congresswoman Lee chronicled her intensive involvement in writing the initial PEPFAR legislation and both Congresswomen emphasized their commitment to increase funding for the PEPFAR program and to eliminate earmarks and limitations on it. They highlighted the importance of counseling and testing and were publicly tested at several sites.

¶6. (U) WAD activities attended by the delegation included speaking at a New Start HIV/AIDS testing site in Zola, Soweto, a public-private partnership with Levi Strauss and PEPFAR. This is part of Levi's Red for Life Initiative that attracts youth to counseling and testing with concerts and musicians. The Congresswomen led by example by getting tested publicly and were impressed with New Start's very thorough pre-and post-test counseling as well as the site's enhanced efforts for confidentiality. The Congresswomen also spoke at a breakfast of the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Johannesburg, at which Ambassador Bost delivered the keynote speech. Later, the delegation had a lively exchange about HIV and AIDS with a group of students at the Embassy's Rosa Parks Library in Johannesburg.

¶7. (U) On November 30, the Congresswomen spoke at a WAD ceremony at the Embassy that was co-sponsored by the Diplomatic Association of Pretoria. The podium was set against the backdrop of an American flag encircled by a mammoth red AIDS ribbon almost as high as the building itself. The event included a mobile testing facility and encouraged the diplomatic community to lead by example. The Congresswomen were once again publicly tested.

18. (U) The Delegation also met with Johnson & Johnson executives and visited several Johnson & Johnson sponsored sites. These included visits to the Burn Center and HIV Support Unit at the Chris Hani Baragwaneth Hospital in Johannesburg and travel to Limpopo Province to attend a Humana Person-to-Person, Total Control of the Epidemic (TCE) Program for World AIDS Day. Although this particular project is sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, PEPFAR funds other TCE locations.

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Comment  
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19. (SBU) The Delegation was well-received by the SAG, meeting with two Ministers and receiving an initial positive response from the Minister of Trade and Industry, although scheduling conflicts prevented that meeting from taking place. This reception was significantly warmer than normally extended to visiting delegations. This is likely due to CBCF support of the ANC during apartheid and the CBCF's traditional focus on public health, leadership education and economic development issues.  
BOST